Sino-Indian Border dispute

†553. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':
SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have initiated any rounds of negotiation with Chinese representatives to solve Sino-Indian border disputes;

(b) if so, the number of negotiation rounds held between March, 1998 to June, 2001 in this regard; and

(c) the area of disputed land on the border that has come to light so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Between March 1998 and June 2001, the India-China Joint Working Group on the Boundary Question has met twice in April 1999 and April 2000 and is scheduled to meet later this year. The India-China Expert Group of Diplomatic and Military Officials has met three times in November 1999, November 2000 and June 2001.

(c) China illegally claims approximately 90,000 sq kms of Indian territory in the Eastern Sector of the India-China boundary in Arunachal Pradesh. China also continues to be in illegal occupation of approximately 38,000 sq kms in the Indian State of Jammu & Kashmir. In addition, under the so-called Sino-Pakistan Boundary Agreement of 1963, Pakistan illegally ceded 5,180 sq kms of Indian territory in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir to China.

Indo-Nepal bilateral relations

554. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there have been some strains in Indo-Nepal bilateral relations during recent months;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether there was a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of India and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Nepal in New Delhi during the last week of March, 2001 where at the entire gamut of Indo-Nepal relations were discussed; and

(d) if so, the details thereof particularly the implication of the bilateral visits between Nepal and China on Indo-Nepal relations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (d) In the last week of December 2000, alleged anti-Nepal remarks of Indian film artist Hrithik Roshan sparked off riots in which properties of people of Indian origin and Indian joint ventures were attacked. The remarks were never made and were denied personally by Shri Roshan, but the disturbances continued, instigated by forces inimical to friendly India-Nepal relations. Indian channels were blanked off from the television by local cable operators for almost a week. Government of India took up the matter at the highest level with His Majesty's Government of Nepal to ensure the safety and security of Indians and people of Indian origin in Nepal and their properties. Government of Nepal conveyed its assurance that necessary measures would be taken. A Commission of Inquiry was also set up by His Majesty's Government of Nepal for investigating these incidents.

Foreign Secretary Level Talks were held in New Delhi on January 30 and 31, 2001 between India and Nepal. Some other important bilateral meetings have also been held since.

The Foreign Minister of Nepal, Hon'ble Chakra Prasad Bastola, transited through India on March 30, 2001 on his way to Denmark. The main programme during this visit was the release of two books of the former Prime Minister of Nepal, Shri B.P. Koirala, under the aegis of the India-Nepal B.P. Koirala Foundation. During the visit, Foreign Minister Bastola also paid a courtesy call on the External Affairs Minister during which the two Ministers touched on various aspects of bilateral co-operation.

The Late King Birendra of Nepal paid a State visit to China in February 2001. Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji also visited Nepal in May 2001. In the previous years, China and Nepal had exchanged a number of high level delegations.

The Government of India continues to follow the developments in Nepal closely and is taking such steps as are necessary to safeguard our interests.